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CALIFORNIA SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL STUDY, BERKELEY

Mr. Nyland: Well, if we don't want it to be too late. I am perfectly willing to answer a few more questions if there are any, or if you are interested in some other aspects.

Question: How do you understand in the words of _____, the big "I" you see it as something quite singular, as an integration of the many, or something quite other?

Mr. Nyland: No. It is really quite other, and in order to bring it back again to knowledge, for oneself that one can more or less fathom that is within the framework. The beginning of little "I" is the part of an intellectual body which starts to exist. You see if "I" has to be observant and objective, the observation process means something mental and must take place and for the time being - when I say the little "I", it starts with the do of the intellectual octave, so that the "I" goes thru certain developments which have to do with observation in the proper sense, as remaining impartial and as being subject to the law of simultaneity, that then the next step in that development in accordance with the do, re, mi of that scale would be re. The note re indicates that the "I" has sufficiently grown up to be able to utilize what it knows and what it has as knowledge for the purpose of helping man as he is whose "I" he is, -i.e., to whom he belongs. Each "I" becomes individual for each person. In principal, all "I's" are the same because they represent a form of life outside of the manifestation of man, to some extent each man when he wishes to create his "I" creates "I" in God's

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image to the extent that he understands God, or at least thinks that he knows , so that the quality of "I", being now objective is for man, as if God is looking at him from the standpoint of Heaven accepting that what he is, as God's child. But then, God's child, not knowing exactly what to do with this life, so the note in this octave what we call participation, and the little "I" full-grown more or less, that is having the ability, has to test its ability to see if it is actual, and it does that ^{by} being present to the manifestations of man in an unconscious state to see if this little "I" has enough wisdom to help him overcome or to solve certain problems. This participation problem means that whenever man in an unconscious state, with his unconscious mind, does certain things-- a certain quality of objectivity is introduced next to it. And that then the judgment is in accordance with objective rules and not subjective rules. You see-- it is gradually the spreading of that what is the "I" in an intellectual sense. If it is located in part of the brain - that like yeast, it starts to spread over the totality of the brain as it is and changes it and converts it into an objective, possibility of mental function.

Question: That is one way of putting it ,but then think of the terms of the rules, as it is given by Gurdjieff in the Eastern sense, that is the idea of the house--- the house that has no master, the servants that are running about doing the tasks that are not appointed.

Mr. Nyland: That is Ouspensky, not Gurdjieff. It's not Gurdjieff.

It's quite ^{all} right if one can apply it.

Question: All right, then if the master is present, then how about the

guests ? The preparation of the house to receive the guests, now can you regard the guests as being the great "I" in that sense ?

Mr. Nyland: No, because the guests have no relation to me. "I" has a relation, "I" is benevolent, but the guest is only nice. I can prepare for something that I call guests, as it has a quality and that I like the guest well enough that I would like to imitate him. If the guest is God, then I have a problem because I want to prepare living quarters for God which I hope he will want to stay in. The possible development for man if he wants to build certain mansions in heaven is that he tries to understand what is required for the maintenance of a mansion in heaven, or when he says- I want the kingdom of heaven within me, where will it be ? And then the result is that I try to imagine God visiting me, looking at me, looking at that what I have built and hoping that he will sit down and live there for a little while. I think what happens really-- man has to have experience in order to build something that could become permanent for God, and for that reason, he needs something that will help him to see actually if that is sufficient or not and uses for that purpose his emotional body. So that the emotional body, you might say, is temporary headquarters, and he finds out during the process of building that what is right and what is wrong. And every once in a while God comes by the door, but he doesn't come in, he looks in and he tells- no, not yet, not right yet-- there's too much junk, too much furniture, too much decoration, it's not simple enough, you're not free as yet from this world, and then of course, he says- I'll come again. After sometime, he comes back then he says yes, it is a

little better, but it is not a place for me to live. In the third place, he comes back and says what has happened to your soul, and then says; Oh, I build a little house quite separately and then God says, I'm interested in that. I think that is how the process goes.

Question: But couldn't it be that God is within and the door is shut, and you have to open and shut - He's already there.

Mr. Nyland: The trouble is, that if it is shut, I don't know if He is there. For all practical purposes, He doesn't exist.

Question: Now, that's what I mean--most of this is opening the door, I think He's already there.

Mr. Nyland: Magnetic Center is within that kind of a door, that is a little compartment, the holy of the holies of the temple on the essential essence, and I think there is something that I call a door which I believe from the outside is locked, which I know with my limited sense of knowing what is magnetic center tries to imagine that the magnetic center also considers it the same way. Now, that what I hear of magnetic center- is a cry that it wants to be let out -so, I know there is something there and I call it life-- or, is it God; it is really that what is the representation in man of life which is God like. It is a little closer to call it magnetic center because more or less I can handle it. If I call it God, I'm very much afraid that I would die even if I tried to open the door, but when it is on my level, and I say yes I assume it to be my own because it is my property as life, then I become interested in setting it free, and that what really happens when "I" starts to develop and enters into the manifestations on periphery and after

some time, it is not sufficient to stay with that which is participation and manifestations. The third step in that little octave means it is what we call experimental theory. It is the penetration of "I", further than that which is surface, and now reaching my essence. It is that which is the quality of my manifestations, without being dependent on the multiplicity of so many going further inside to a center in which things become simpler and much more unified. It is on that particular kind of a trip that the "I" when it reaches closer and closer to the center of my existence, hears a little cry of the magnetic center wanting to be let out, and that is really then it answers the purpose for which "I" was originally created because it didn't know what to do with its life. At that moment, when it hears it, it knows it has an aim, it finds the door and the parable is that the door is open, but it is probably the most amazing fact for the little "I" to discover that infinity existed all the time, and for me to acknowledge that what my life is, is really God.

Speaker: I think that I will adjourn the meeting formally now at 10 o'clock, and--

Mr. Nyland: And, I will also end the meeting and leave formally.

Question: Yes, as quite a few people would like you to say a few words about your life with this Gurdjieff--

Mr. Nyland: Life with father--

Question: Gurdjieff.

Mr. Nyland: There is very little to say about it and Gurdjieff for me was a remarkable man. When he talks about remarkable men in the second series he doesn't talk about himself, but he talks really

completely about himself in different phases as descriptions of men who have lived and who were his friends and with whom he traveled for 20 years in order to discover, or they were the seekers after truth. He came to America in 1924 and gave a series of some talks and demonstrations of movements. As you know, after the 20 years of Gurdjieff's life, when he started and then Ouspensky met him in Moscow and St. Petersburg of which we have a little bit of recollection of inaccordance with "In Search of the Miraculous". After the revolution started, he went down South towards Odessa and Kiev, and then already during the period when he was in St. Petersburg De Hartmann joined him and a little later Madame De Hartmann--and these are together with Saltzman, who was then also on the scene--formed a little group and had a little group which then lived in went through the Caucasus and finally reached Constantinople. If you want to read about that particular period-- it is very interesting, a book by De Hartmann himself, before he died, and published by his wife afterwards-- it is called "My Life Or Our Life With Gurdjieff". It is probably the truest kind of a description of living with Gurdjieff as it actually happened. He stayed in Constantinople for a little while and after sometime - decided to go further West. Because the whole purpose of Gurdjieff's ideas as he collected them, was to correlate them in some form and give perspective to the different aspects of it and in trying to do this, and then finding that it was necessary, also, you might say, for his own purposes, to test out what he really knew and to see if it could be adapted and understood by the so-called Western psychic, he went to Germany, stayed there

- had a time planned to found an Institute, Talarot, Talarot, which he didn't with _____, went to Berlin, from Berlin to London with the invitation of Ouspensky, didn't find conditions in London sufficient, and went back to Paris where he then founded the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in Fountainebleau, that was around 1920- 1921. Ouspensky was then in London and some other people from London, from Ouspensky's groups, among which was Orage, came to the Fountaine bleau and were there with him between 1921- 1924. In 1924 Gurdjieff decided to come to America to give these demonstrations, Orage came ^{with} him. Shortly after he returned again and in 1924, that was approximately in September 1924, he was as you know, perhaps you do know, it has been described several times, he was practically dead for three months, was unconscious. During this period he realized there was something necessary for him to do since he could not then fulfill his aim in maintaining the institute and he started dictating in a very simple form the principles which are now in the book Beelzebub. Altogether there have been four editions of that book, and it has been rewritten many times. The warning has been rewritten atleast seven or eight times that I know of and all during the time that Gurdjieff, afterwards, after 1924, when he came through several trips to America, totalling seven, every time we saw him, certain chapters of the book were read, and we had to listen to it ad infinitum. I think I've heard the chapter on America atleast twenty-five times, read aloud, later in the evening when everyone was tired and half way fallen asleep and it was not any better when you finally got to the Fountainebleau in Paris, because that

was the same thing, because during that time Gurdjieff was writing and for seven years he wrote and tried it out on the dog, as it were, to find out what the reaction was or what happened to the faces as expression of the people who listened to it. During this time Gurdjieff was you might say excommunicado, he did not teach very much and he didn't say very much although there were periods and particular of arise before 1924. But after his accident his life became a little different and there were not as many meetings, but there were so-called visits at which of course in New York, when he was there, everything stood still and everything was connected with Gurdjieff. I think there was a group of us who devoted their lives, particularly during the time he was there to practically nothing else, would have dinner with him, would have lunch with him, attended to whatever his wishes were, sat up late and talked and discussed and heard some music and did some movements, also during the later parts of that period, got to bed about 4 o'clock in the morning, attended to ordinary professional work at 9 a.m., didn't get any sleep whatsoever, tried to play hockey as far as professional work was concerned, and all the time being really in attention you might say in order to find out more and more by being in his constant presence. During that time it was extremely useful, he could teach by means of certain things he did to you, sometimes of course you didn't understand what he meant. Sometimes he was intentionally mumbling to say really and then you acted on it and it was usually wrong whichever way you did it you got it in the neck. This was the way he taught and at the same time you knew

that he did it for you and it was not just a certain desire on his part to be different. He was at that time a fairly heavy-set man, and had always an _____ cap on his head, and a good overcoat most of time- he came in the winter-and he would walk by slowly and then during the period when he was writing he always would sit at Childs Restaurant on Columbus Circle, or at Childs Restaurant on Fifth Avenue, both of which are now more or less they are gone, at that time they were simple little restaurants and Gurdjieff would sit and drink coffee, and not drink it, and let it go, and let it ^{get} cool, and then it would have to be replaced and he would drink coffee with lemon and then of course nothing happened he would write, you could come, sometimes you sat opposite him, you didn't dare to say a word until he finished then, "now I am very tired, I go home," and then you would have to take him home. The same thing happened in Fountainebleau, when he was there, you could take him. And I remember I had a car at that time and he wanted to drive it to see what it was like and I didn't like the way he drove, so I was very happy that when he said, "Now I know," he had to drive up the hill from Fountainebleau up to the village and I remember it was a buick car and he almost wrecked it, but Gurdjieff was a bad driver, he didn't know very much about machinery, but in any event, he got around, so that finally when you got to the little restaurant, we sat there, cafe, again drank coffee, sit there and sit there and sit there, and he would write and write and write, you didn't dare to disturb him, you changed the coffee for him, it had to be replaced, it was cold, he didn't like this and that was no good, and finally he took a little cahier, blue,

put it in his pocket, "I am very tired," so then we went down and had something to eat. Gudjleff was a remarkable person in the sense that he kept for different people always this particular attitude of wishing to teach and there was nothing in his life that during that period and particularly after he had finished with the book, at least finished writing the first series that he knew wouldn't devote for the benefit of other people, and sometimes I think he was very much disgusted with our behavior because what would we know and what did we know sitting in the presence of such a man; I remember many times going with him to buy some stuff in China Town in New York and he would sit next to the man who would be driving the car and sitting there, and trying to guide him through the streets and he would sit and here I was thinking, thinking what the devil can I ask him now, what is now? Here is the great man sitting next to me knowing all the questions in this world and all I have to do is just ask him and I honestly, I swear I never dared to ask him any questions until finally we landed again at the hotel Wellington with all the vegetables and everything, and then I said to myself and now what did I get out of it? I was very much afraid at times because I was afraid he might tell me the truth and I didn't want to know it, and at the same time when he did, and when he gave you certain information or exercises of a certain kind, you were so immensely grateful because you knew, that in that he was really giving you what was good for you and he was willing to part with it. He was in all sense of the word a real man, that is a person in whom you could count you could rely on him anytime that you had something you could go to

him, and although you may have waited a little bit before, and he may sometimes have made it very difficult to talk to him, when, you actually could get across that you insisted that really you wanted to know, he would tell you and there was no doubt about that what he told you, not only what he meant, but it was right. We of course, we believed that he had supernatural powers and to some extent who knows because it is very difficult to say what would have happened if you had not followed what he told you to do. That he was a bad driver, I think probably it was probably inherent in him, because he wanted to put different people to different kinds of test so we'll give him the benefit of the doubt, but I do know that sometimes he would appear so completely unconscious that nothing in the whole world would make ~~would make~~ me believe that he actually knew what he was doing, and at the same time I didn't dare to have that kind of a thought, and so I am still in doubt very much in certain behavior in which I become of course engaged in and which I didn't like very much if that I had to attribute to special attempt to teach me, or that he actually was doing something else, but you see these kinds of things always will remain partly as legends about a man, and particularly if one really cared for him either you loved Gurdjieff or you didn't, he disturbed many people, he had a certain way that people didn't like and he poked at them, and he really could hit the core as he would say, and to tell, and in particular when you thought that he would be a guru and you would expect him to sit underneath a palm tree and disseminate all kinds of good information for the benefit of anyone who would come that

you would see in front of you an ordinary kind of a man who absolutely was ridiculously closed th sometimes, and very, very sloppy about his dress every once in awhile and that he did things which disturbed you too much and certainly were against "Bon ton", that you had to accept because the great man was there right next to you and even if you didn't dare to say anything you certainly had reverence. There was no question about respect, Gurdjieff commanded it, anyone time that he wanted to say certain things, there was no question about other people taking what he said and giving it enough attention. He cooked himself and invited several people sometimes large groups usually at lunch it was a little bit more intimate and then we of the more intimate circle of course we enjoyed it particularly when, there was no room for someone ~~else~~ and all these kinds of vanities, and you might say this love for oneself and being spoken to and not someone else who sits there hoping to speak to him, if you are singled out you are glorified in that everything of an ordinary human nature, every vice and every virtue was brought out in some way or other and you had to take it in some way whichever way you could and to what extent you did or that you could take it. Drinking for instance in order to loosen oneself up to see more of the psyche in accordance with Gurdjieff, and for what ever reason he did it I do not know, because he had his standard of living he knew for himself what he wished, in my opinion of course there was no question about his consciousness, no question about his "I", no question about

his harmonious behavior forms, no question about his knowledge, no question about understanding of the difficulties people were in and a tremendous admiration when you read "All And Everything", that it really contains all and everything of every kind of a phase of life and it should indicate to man that this kind of a person who has written that, really knew what he was writing about and he really knew by his experience what it meant, what it meant to be, to be alive. Of course I loved him, there was no doubt about that. And that the person who has helped me probably more, Orage, not Ouspensky, Ouspensky did not have particular meaning for me, because he was a cold fish, but Orage, was human and Orage was around Gurdjieff very much during the period of 1929, up to 1929 from 1924 when Orage also for purposes of his own was you might say commanded by Gurdjieff to do something else. It rather a complicated business to see why Ouspensky left, why Salzman was very unhappy towards the end of his life, yet still stayed around at Fountainebleau, was probably a little bit disappointed in Gurdjieff, and why Orage also went back to London, and only after some time wished he could come back, but in the meantime he died which was very unfortunate. Gurdjieff treated people like that, he chased de Hartmann out of I remember because I happened to be there, I was the only witness of how Gurdjieff at that time chased after de Hartmann. After de Hartmann had done something wrong, he took a kitchen knife and chased him out of the door. De Hartmann ran and ran for his life, thinking that perhaps Gurdjieff would kill, but he wouldn't, but de Hartmann thought so. After that de Hartmann disappeared for 25 years, and it is a

terrible thing. After one year Madame de Hartmann arranged for a meeting between de Hartmann and Gurdjieff. Again I was there it was in Monmartre at one of the cafes that we usually frequented and there was de Hartmann sitting when we came and he was at that time as you know a musician and had to earn his money in music and had taken on the appearance of a musician with a flowing tie and looked exactly like a person should look when he is an artistic musician. They talked for quite some time and de Hartmann begged to come back and Madame de Hartmann saw him, this is a way, you might think its cruel. And sometimes one doesn't know why Gurdjieff did this to some people, and sometimes it may be understood that there are qualities in man which are to be killed in some way or other regardless of how difficult it is and also regardless of how difficult it was for Gurdjieff. De Hartmann represented at that time at the Prieure for him, a person who could play his music and was of course instrumental in the movements and playing that for the sake of de Hartmann he chased him out, it meant for Gurdjieff, he had to start all over again to find the proper person to be able to continue with the music particularly since that period he was contemplating another trip to America. These are the things that I mean, when a person is interested in teachings, that he also must know what is involved for instance there was someone by the name of Metz at the Prieure at that time who was at that time a little bit, let's say taking care of Gurdjieff, of all his necessities, and this man had a task, that at every hour during the night, he would have to wake up, an alarm clock would be used, he had to go to Gurdjieff, wake him up, and

then he could go back to bed again; you see another person would say, all right Metz you do that every hour, and you wake up every hour. And then the next morning, Gurdjieff asked, how have you done it, No Gurdjieff wanted to be awoken up to make sure, and it was at the expense of Gurdjieff also to be wakened up in order to show that he was with him in the task that he had given to this man, this is the way Gurdjieff was, he worked with you, he was never separate, he always educated with you knowing that he was helping you in someway or other, and it was never separate from you and when you needed him he was there. There will be many stories about Gurdjieff, also little legends, also little reminces, every once in awhile you get them in Fritz Peters books, for instance or Katie Hume, or someone else, for instance who writes about it like "Journal of a Pupil", things that are perhaps partly true, partly not so true, a little bit embellished, a little showish, how wonderful they were so that Gurdjieff was so benevolent to them that he wanted to talk to them, that he told them certain things which he did not tell anyone else ect., ect.. I think its liable it happens of course. I can add my own to the same kind of thing, and say he only told me and nobody else, I would almost say its human nature, and the little stones will of course accumulate a little bit and become less and less truthful. We lost a great deal when Gurdjieff died because before this, the tacit assumption was always it didn't matter if we didn't know what to do was just fly to France and see him and when this fact of his death started to penetrate, there was something which took place in a few of us, because we had to face then life inde-

pendently of Gurdjieff, and who was there to teach; this was always a very difficult problem, because Gurdjieff never made anyone really a successor to himself, he felt it was necessary too for each person to understand that to the extent that he could actually work or follow whatever his commands and his orders were and as then it was then up to others to find a way and that Gurdjieff was not going to provide for that, so we left, we were left you might say in a certain, not knowing exactly what to do, and after that a group of us simply formed the Gurdjieff Foundation of which, of course, I was a member for some time, and it is still in existence, and it is I hope flourishing but there was a certain period of which I didn't find that they were adhering to what Gurdjieff really meant and obstinate perhaps I was and maybe a little conceited, I simply felt that it was better to leave them alone and to do this kind of, to undertake this kind of endeavor of having groups by myself, so far it has worked out fairly well, there are many groups now in existence and it keeps me a little busy to go back and forth, but at least there is something, which is quite definitively growing and it is one of the best proofs that as far as work is concerned it also can become contagious, and that actually if a person starts to understand what is meant by it, that it becomes for him a form for his life and actually a regulator for his conduct, and it is in that sense it has much more, and a much deeper meaning than even Gurdjieff, his life represents, and that which is legacy from Gurdjieff, can be taken at the present time by anyone who wishes and if he wants to spend ^{the} time and energy and the wish really to understand in

reading you might say "All And Everything", and through certain forms of preparation, and then to get knowledge wherever he can find it in order to embellish his own life and actually make something out of himself, everybody who wishes is free to do this, because there is absolutely no rule against anyone becoming interested in the desire to become more and more objective to himself; there is nothing exclusive about Gurdjieff, Gurdjieff allowed anybody to come, invited them, let them go, never held on to them, if they wished to go it was all right, there was no school of that kind with a regular attendance was being checked up so that you were there or not, he did not mind, it was entirely up to your own conscience if you wanted to work, it was up to you, if you didn't you could leave and he would say good-bye, just let it be for whatever it is, so this is a little gossip added to the ideas of Gurdjieff, but you see it gives perspective of something, without any question Gurdjieff was not just anybody, he was a most remarkable man, he had definitively an influence on several people and whenever one wants to find out what is work really, and you keep on trying to read, if you read "All And Everything", of course, what I advise you to do is read it for the first time as he suggests like any book; don't try to understand it, don't be afraid of reading further when you suspect that something else is meant and it just eludes you, just read it. Read it for the second time, during the process of being in contact with whatever is in the book you will be already changed a little and you will start to question certain things that always have been considered as paramount value; maybe you doubt a little bit the

validity of them; when you read it for the second time, Gurdjieff suggests that you read it as if you read it to someone else aloud, it does not mean that you have to read it aloud to someone, but you have to read it aloud for yourself as if someone is there, it simply means that you have to enunciate, that you have to pronounce the words correctly, that in what you are reading it should make sense because someone else is listening to it. It is as if when you read it aloud, you listen to it and you read it with another part of yourself; again from beginning to end, again not skipping, again not reading here and there, even if you are tempted don't do it. There is a chapter in the book "Sequence" form and sequence, the meaning of that is, that in reading or hearing a book read like that certain things take place which are a logical sequence of one event after another and you will not be able to make changes when you are not going through this particular sequence, or if afterwards, you become exposed to something, without having gone through the previous readings, you will be prematurely, I will almost say angelic, you will never become a conscious man, try to adhere to what he prescribes; the third time when you read it, you read it to that which is your conscience, you read it to that in you that really counts, you read in such a way that this time you want to know what is really meant, and it is not only the third time, you read it many, many times with that in mind, what does he mean, what really is he doing to me, why can't he say it simply, why doesn't want me to know it right away, why is it necessary for me to dig and dig and dig? The question of the dog hunting for a treasure, it has to work for it with its front paws, and finally he digs down and there it is and in this process the dog has

become God. You see this the process of this kind of reading, this is the idea that one has to work, I said a little while ago for a living, you have to work for the possibility of trying to understand yourself, and it is not going to be easy when all of your life you have been unconscious and you would like to have at least a little glimpse of consciousness; don't think it is that kind of a task that you just will find it by reading or even associating with certain ideas, and that they then will dribble over on you and that you don't have to do anything. Geibel had a saying _____, it simply means that what needed has to be fought for, if you don't you will never appreciate what you get and moreover, it is doubtful that when you get it you will digest it. So reading for the third time, means the entry into something which could change your real life and maybe on the basis of that, if you, and what I hope of course if you read it in the way I think you ought to read it, and I hope in the way you might be effected, you could become a different kind of a man, not very easily and not always with pleasure, and sometimes as Gurdjieff says you might lose your taste a little bit for things that are a little clear to you, but if you wish, then do it. If you want to go the whole hog, that is what is required in order to extract from it what is the ultimate value. So sometime I'll see you again, but in the meantime, find out what groups there are if you are serious, study here in Berkeley, come to New York if you wish, ^Tthere are several groups in different places, where we teach Gurdjieff, not Ouspensky; Gurdjieff as it should be, and as Gurdjieff meant it. So good luck if you do try for a conscious life!

Transcribed by Russell Schreiber